

A lamentable Ballad of the Ladies Fall,

Declaring how a Gentlewoman through her too much trust came to her end,
and how her Lover slew himselfe.

The tune of, In Pescod time.



Mark well my heavie solemne Tale,
you loyall Lovers all,
And heedfully heare in your heart,
a gallant Ladies fall.
Long was she woo'd, ere she was won
to lead a wedded life;
But folly wrought her overthrow,
before she was a Wife,
Too soon alas she gave consent,
to yeeld unto his will,
Though hee protested so be true
and faithfull to her still,
She felt her body altered quite,
her bright hue waxed pale;
Her faire red cheeks chang'd colour while,
her strength began to fail,
So that with many a sorrowfull sigh,
this beauteous maiden miled;
With grieved heart perceiv'd her self
to be conceiv'd with child,
She kept it from her Fathers sight,
so close as close might be,
And so put on her silken Gown,
none might her swelling see.
Unto her Lover secretly
she did her selfe betray;
And walking with him hand in hand,
these words to him did say.
Behold said she a Maids distress,
my Love brought to the Bow,
Behold I lay with child by thee,
though none thereof do know.

The little babe springs in my womb,
to bear the Fathers teele,
Let it not be a bastard child,
sith I made thee my choice.
Come come my love perform thy vow,
and wed me out of hand;
O leave me not in these extremes,
in grief alwayes to stand.
Think on thy former promise made,
thy vows and Oathe each one,
Remember with what bitter tears
to me thou mad'st thy mean;
Convey me to some secret place,
and marry me with speed,
Or with thy Rapier end my life,
ere further shame proceed.
Alas my dearest Love quoth he
my greatest joy on earth.
Which way can I convey thee hence
without a sudden death.
Thy friends they be of high degree,
and I of mean estate;
Full hard it is to get thee forth
out of thy fathers gate.
Dread not thy self to save my fame,
and if thou taken be,
My self will step betweene the str
and take the harm on me.
So shall I scape dishonour quite,
if so I should be slain,
What could they say but that true
and good a Ladies lane.

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And fear not any hurt her harm,
 my self will so befall,
 That I will go along with thee,
 unseen of mortal eyes.
 Disguised like some pretty Page,
 I'll meet thee in the dark.
 And all alone I'll come to thee
 hid by my father's Park.
 And there quoth he I'll meet my love,
 if God lend me life,
 And this day month without all fail,
 I will make thee my wife,
 When with a sweet and loving kiss,
 they parted presently;
 And at their parting bright tears,
 stood in each others eye.
 At length the wished day was come,
 whereas this lovely maid,
 with lovely eyes and strange attire,
 for her true lover staide.
 When any person she espied
 come riding over the plain,
 She thought it was her own true love,
 but all her joyes were vain.
 Then did she weep and sore bewail
 her most unhappy state,
 When did she speak these wofull words
 when succourlesse she staide.
 O false forsworn and faithlesse wretch,
 disloyall to thy Love:
 Hast thou forgot thy promise made,
 and wilt thou perjur'd prove.
 And hast thou now forsaken me,
 in this my sad distress;
 To end my daies in open shame,
 which thou mightst well redresse
 Who worth the time I did believe
 that flattering tongue of thine,
 Would God that I had never seen
 the tears of thy false eye.
 And thus with manie a sorrowfull sigh
 homeward she went againe,
 No rest came in her wat'ry eyes,
 she felt such bitter pain.

In travell strong they fell that night,
 with many a bitter throw.
 What wofull pangs she felt that night,
 both each good woman know.
 She called for her waiting Maide,
 that lay at her beds feet;
 Who musing at her mistresse we,
 did fast begin to weep.
 Weep not quoth she but shut the doore,
 and windows round about;
 Let none bewail my wretched case,
 but keep all persons out.
 O Mistresse call your mother dear,
 of women you have need;
 And of some skillfull midwife help,
 the better may you speed:
 Call not my Mother for thy life,
 nor call no women here,
 The Midwives help comes now too late,
 my death I do not fear.
 With that the babe sprung in her womb,
 no creature being nigh,
 And with a sigh that broke her heart,
 this gallant Dame did die,
 This living little infant young,
 the Mother being dead,
 Resign'd it's new received breath,
 to him that had him made.
 Next morning came her Lover true,
 affrighted at this news,
 And he for sorrow slew himself,
 whom each one did accuse.
 The Mother with the new born babe,
 was both laid in one grave;
 Their parents overcome with we,
 no joy of them could have.
 Take heed you dainty Damselfs all,
 of flattering words beware,
 And of the honour of your name
 have you a speciall care;
 Too true this storie is,
 as manie one can tell,
 By others harms learn to be wise,
 and thou shalt do full well.